

# mutate#5



## featuring:

- An Interview with Venus Bleeding
- More Gender Mayhem
- A Sissy Quiz

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Thanks for this issue go out to Chris W., Cath, Larry-Bob, Joey, Seeley, David Kittyboy, Christina, Hank, the members of Venus Bleeding, Jon G., Media Alliance, and everyone who has passed me a zine, told me they like my werk, and all the kind folks i appropriated images and ideas from. Ultima  
2 Ratio Simulacrum.

# intro



I usually write the intro after the rest of this mutation known as mutate is but today i'm feeling frisky.

It's been two years this month (May)

since the first issue of Mutate came out. I think that 5 issues in two years isn't that bad. Just to do a quick review:

2 years

5 issues

2 presidents

2 semi-serious lovers

too many fucktoys

more music than i know what to do with.

yak.

I can't keep on with this list. Ok, so a lot's happened, and i still love this as much as when I started. I think the relevance has changed for me a bit, though. It's one thing to be a queerpunk kid in Milwaukee, or anywhere for that matter, that's not San Francisco (or maybe NYC). The sad unfortunate truth, however, is that queerkids who are punks, or into hip-hop, or hippies, or anarchists, or ???, still get ignored, put down, and shut out by "mainstream" gay publications. If ya don't fit, ya don't matter.

So no matter where you are geographically, and sub-culturally, you do matter. (climbing onto soapbox)  
There are lots of good people in your community (not the Capitol "G" one, the one where you live) who are doing cool things every day. Making music. Zines. Films. TV and radio. Also serving coffee, and selling

Leaglese - "First thing we do, we kill all the lawyers"  
-William Shakespeare

but seriously. Mutate is free. if you paid for it, then you got ripped off. dildohead. if you want to submit something, please feel free. now accepting contributions for #6. Mutate is a new queer zine. if you like it, or have questions or comments, please tell us. we attempt to distribute in boston, milwaukee, madison, nyc, ashville, atlanta and san francisco. check your local coffee shop, alternative/queer book store, or get it from a friend. if you picked this up and aren't going to keep it, please pass it on. and please recycle, duh.

Reach out and touch somebody

email: [milo@mutatezine.com](mailto:milo@mutatezine.com)

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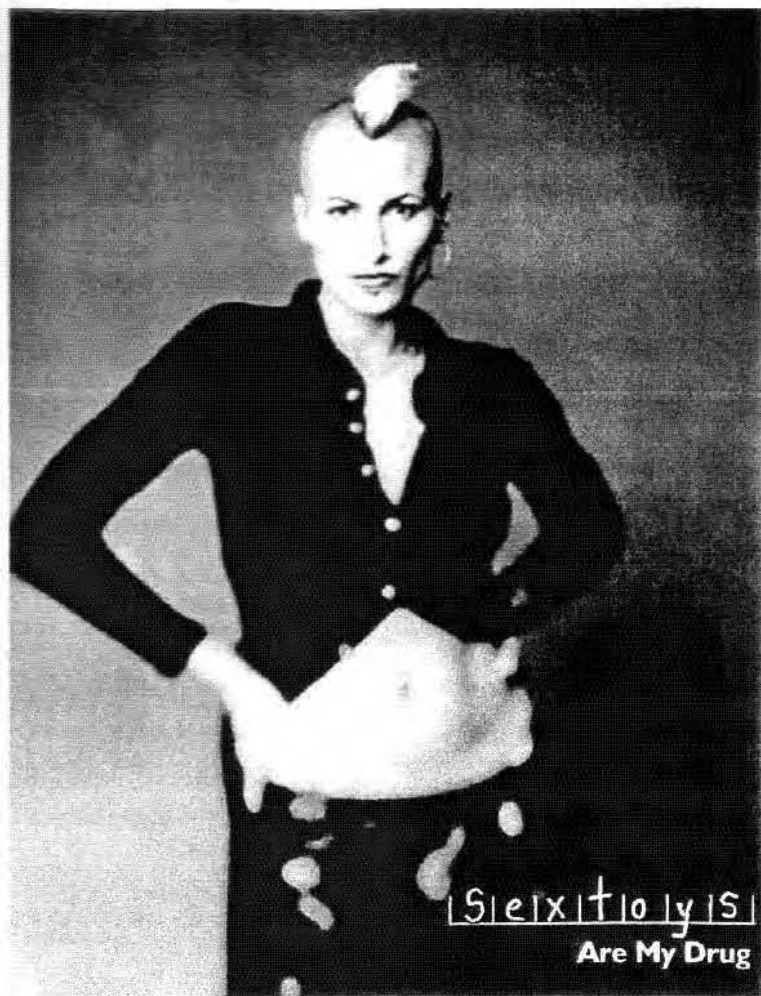
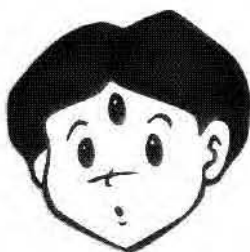
mutate is moving again! check the website for our new address

books, and designing webpages and stickers and stencils. They all need to be recognized and supported. And they could be you. They COULD be you. They could be YOU  
{{End Soapbox}}

Ok, in this issue, we'll see what happens. I make no promises, but i can tell you this. There's the usual fun stuff, along with some unusual fun stuff. Thanx for this go to a lot of people, but especially Joey, Cath, 'Stina, Angelique from the band Venus Bleeding, et. al.

So, from the batcave that is our humble Mutate Zine mobile office...

M





# 5 WILL GET YOU 10

## AN INTERVIEW WITH VENUS BLEEDING

Venus Bleeding is an Oakland, CA based rock band. I first encountered them when they opened for Le Tigre last fall. They are pretty unique in a number of ways, and they generally make me very happy, which is what music is all about.

The lineup is as follows:

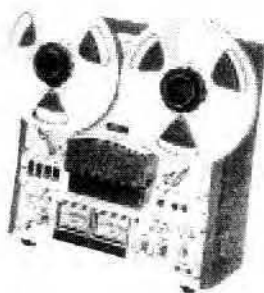
Angilique X - Vocals

Corey: Drums

Jen: Electric Violin, percussion

Denise: Guitar

Sonya: Bass



## Venus Bleeding Interview Questions:

### Music

*1) A little background please:*

*How long have you been around?*

Cory: From Freemont, CA, born Oakland, CA, Age 27. Playing drums since age 6.

Jen: I've been with Venus Bleeding for almost 5 years! I started playing violin when I was 6 and played mostly classical music all the way through college.

Sonya: I don't remember how long Venus Bleeding has been together - a long time.

Angelique X: Started VB with Denise late 1993, other members joined & formed whole band in 1994.

*What other bands/projects have you been involved in?*

Cory: Submission, Diatribe, S.L.A.

Jen: My first rock band was Youth In Eyes an extremely weird band from 1992 to 1994. I've lost touch with my band mates except for my friend Tracy, who was the lead singer. I currently also sing for ArmaGetItOn, my pseudo-satan rock side project.

Sonya: I was involved in a couple projects before Venus Bleeding and later had the opportunity to play with the short peers and poontwang.

Angelique X: I have been involved in a Goth band called Healthy Morbidity as a singer/flute player. A country band called the EastBay Drifters were I say classic covers like Patsy Cline and racy songs about women!

*Collectively, how many different hairstyles have you gone through since your inception?*

Cory: About 4 or 5

Jen: Hairstyles? Mostly a straight bob with bangs... until now... so I guess two hairstyles... and always dyed red.

Sonya: boring as far as hairstyles go... when I joined

the band, I had long hair now it's short, pretty exciting, eh?

Denise: wow! Hairstyles! Really only about 3, mostly black and red until I recently chopped it off and dyed it blue.

Angelique X: I have had too many styles! Mohawks of EVERY colour, and Aeon Flux bob... Always with the bangs, I like my widows' peak but I love how bangs frame my face. It's just black and going to get really long and big.

*2) The East Bay Express (Feb. 9, 2001) calls you Hard Rock. Is that apt? How do you define yourselves, musically?*

Cory: Good Rock, plain + simple

Jen: I think we are really hard to define musically. We have aspects of hard rock, pop, punk and Goth (what ever Goth means these days!). It's one of my favorite things about us as well as our most frustrating. I love that we're different and original, but it makes it difficult for reviewers, labels, venues etc. to categorize us, which has been a drawback.

Sonya: I think "hard rock" may be on the right path, but I don't really know how to categorize our music. We all have eclectic music tastes that are inherent in our songs. It's impossible for me to reduce our music down to just one categorical description.

Denise: hard rock will suffice-I usually say we're a rock-n-roll band with an electric violin & a few tricks up our sleeve.

Angelique X: Yep hard rock, you can hear other stuff in there but I am too close to the fire to tell what it is if you know what I mean.

*3) I understand that everyone wants to be unique. In my mind, however, the first time I heard you, I immediately thought of a fusion of Concrete Blonde, Grace Slick, and Janis from the Muppet Show. Is this fair? Would it piss you off if I committed that to print?*

Cory: Music is like art or food. Music is art, in fact. No Opinion

Jen: Sounds good to me! I'm a cookie monster fan myself...

Sonya: Hey, Janis from the Muppet Show RULES!

Denise: maybe if Janice & animal got together their offspring would be Venus Bleeding.

Angelique X: It wouldn't piss me off, because I'm guessing that is a reference to my voice. I love both



Blondie and Grace Slick who wrote the biggest 2 hits of Jefferson Airplane! I adore Blondie! Janice? You must be referring to my speaking voice. It's ummm... a bit sexy? I get all sorts of comments on it.

*4) Who are your favorite musicians, and what are you listening to these days?*

Jen: Dead Weight is one of my musical idols. They are a local rock band with only a violin, cello and drums... and the ROCK! Here is a brief and very incomplete list of major bands and local bands that I like (there are really too many to mention). Radiohead is God. Beethoven. A Perfect Circle. Tool. Foo Fighters. Fracas. Crosstaps. Slender. The Cure. Apocalyptica. Rasputina. Dead Kennedys. Nine Inch Nails.

Sonya: My favorite musicians have been and still are: kim deal, kim gordon, joan jett, lester young, paul chambers, tina weymouth, t.rex... ooh, I can't think... there are too many to list... as for who I'm listening to these days... ladytron, the white stripes, le tigre, tipsy, blonde redhead, cheap trick...

Denise: Joan Jett, George Harrison

Angelique X: Oh lordy! I get obsessed with a band at a time and listen till my ears bleed. I have the Gun & Doll Show on repeat along with the lead singer's solo song. I can't say more I'll bloat his ego even more! I love local bands. They are my passion cause I know them and I can relate their music on a personal level... Violet Discord, Crosstaps, Hotbox, Slender. Other than that I listen to country music, the oldies/goodies and newer folks like Wayne Hancock and Hank III. My favorite musicians are my band members, that's we are together for so long ...I really love each of their styles. I can't play those instruments but they really play what's in my head! That is amazing!

*5) Where do you see yourselves in the general category of "girl groups", if at all?*

Cory: Everybody wants to classify us as a 'girl group'.



*Venus Bleeding minus Corey, the drummer*

That is understandable, but I just want to be known as a good band.

Jen: I have no idea... "girl band" is a little limiting... and we have a boy... although I am very proud that we have four strong women up front and can stand toe to toe with any boy band, from hard core punk (Dr. Know) to hard rock (Swarm) and everything in between.

Sonya: Hmmmm... I don't see our selves as a "girl group"; I mean, I know there are predominately women in Venus Bleeding, but that's just how the band came together - it wasn't planned to only find female musicians. However, it is very gratifying to perform with very talented and strong women, but I can't leave out Corey - his drumming style is amazing.

Angelique X: Beyond "girl groups" beyond the gender issue...just people. Of course were women and a man, but I only think of it when others pay attention to it. I think in a way we transcend it, because we don't fit in anywhere, we're making our own place for us and people like us.

#### Sex/Gender

*6) Are any of you queer? If yes, how does it influence the music that you make?*

Cory: Personally I'm not, so it doesn't influence me.

Jen: I'm very bisexual and married to a bisexual man. We have an open relationship which works really well for us. I guess I write about both boy and girl relationships. I wrote the lyrics to Ambiguity, need I say more?

Sonya: "bi bi baby" - for me, my influences, when writing music, comes from so many things... not just my sexuality.

Denise: yes, I'm queer. Most of my muses tend to be women.

Angelique X: I am non gender biased. I am inspired by both sexes. I have "types" of both and have even dated the 3rd sex (transsexual) Love is love.

*7) Visually, you look like tough grrrls + boi. In a butch/femme dichotomy, how do you shake down, and do those roles affect your music or life in any way?*

Jen: I consider myself Femme, I guess, but have never felt the need to fit into any single role. I'm not good at fitting in... or conforming...

Sonya: Wow, do we look tough?[winks] I don't think the way we look affects our music in any way - there's





no visual shtick that we adhere to.

Angelique X: We look femme but are tough, Corey is really sweet. I think ya got it there. Depends on if I am in a pants mood or a dress mood...I have over time developed a part of me to be the stage personality which has thankfully integrated into my life as a whole... that confident person.

*8) What's the most interesting sex that you've ever had? (Not necessarily the best, just most interesting)*

Cory: The first time I achieved orgasm.

Jen: I've had a lot of interesting sex. Bondage, Fetish, S&M, threesomes and foursomes of every combination... I'm very open to almost all experiences. (Is my mom going to read this?) *[not unless you show her, or she sends us stamps for a copy. -Ed.]*

Sonya: buy me a few martinis, and maybe I'll tell ya...

Denise: The most recent & certainly the most interesting experienced (thought we never had sex) was a threesome relationship, my girlfriend(at the time)& I were a part of. It lasted a year with a gorgeous southern girl from New Orleans. She and her twin sister would visit us in Ca. and we would visit them in New Orleans. Yeah, I'd say even though it came to a sad conclusion just a few months ago... it still rates and one of the most interesting & sexually

charged time periods of my life....so far!

Angelique X: Most interesting? I dated and lived with a crossdresser who was the sweetest man but a difficult girl. You could say I had the best of both worlds but they were still learning about themselves and it was difficult to have 2 divas in one relationship.

*9) Do you think that the way you present yourselves as individuals or as a group effect change on the world? Do you see yourselves as role models? And if so, how?*

Cory: I just people that people get a positive vibe from us and feel happy. People who are happy treat others better.

Jen: I think we've never set out to be role models but I think we could be. We signify diversity - straight, gay; bi, boys, girls, tattooed freaks... no labels. And we're all really good people, responsible, respectable, fun, friendly, politically aware, sensitive... just real people. Live and let live... that's what I say... and I think that's what the world needs in a role model these days.

Sonya: If being a role model, means perpetuating the legacy of female songwriters & musicians by encouraging more women to rock, then sure, I hope so...

Angelique X: Yes we do effect change by putting ourselves out in the world with our message. This may sound kooky but I am on a mission. Yes I believe am a role model and have been for some time. As soon as someone admires you and looks up to you, you have a responsibility to the world. I don't do the best job 'cause I'm human but you would be surprised how much you mean to

other people and don't know it.

### Freebie Question:

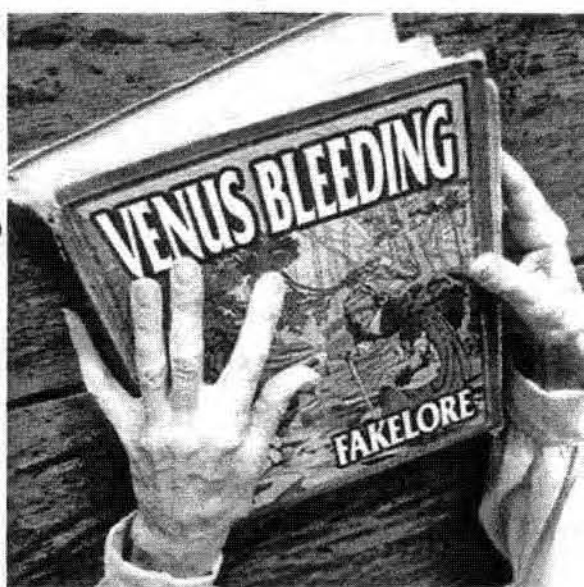
10) *Collectively or individually, do you want to talk about your new CD? Any touring plans, either in the Bay Area or elsewhere? What's next?*

Jen: I'm proud of our new CD. It's our best effort to date. We want to conquer California this year and beyond if possible. We just need a manager, or booker, or label... Any Volunteers???

Sonya: I'm really happy with "Fakelore". I think it's the best recording we have done so far, and our first with Corey. We're trying to plan a small tour in mid to late august... but we'll continue to play the Bay Area, if there are still live music clubs around; and if the clubs that are here want to support local music...

Angelique

X: I love our new CD. Going to tour Modesto to New Mexico and up to Seattle, hopefully at the end of the summer.



*Venus Bleeding's new album*

"Fakelore" is out now. You can get your copy by going to their website:

[www.venusbleeding.com](http://www.venusbleeding.com), and emailing them. [-Ed.]

*skewless promotional*

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# my tiara

by joey stevenson

at a suburban mall i perused the tiara selection at claire's boutique, excited about the upcoming mr trannyshack competition annually in san francisco. i had just ordered this princess's gown from the delia's catalogue, complete with gloves, and needed the final touch: the tiara. i joined in a conversation with some other princesses exactly like me in the store - which tiara would express our girl the best. am i a rhinestone cowgirl, or wanting to match my prince charming. we were all the same. getting ready for prom.

only they didn't see the prince to this princess. or that he didn't really matter to me as much as the fact that i, like them, was getting ready to be an object of desire. unlike these girls, i was dressing not for the boys, but for myself to be out there for the boys. to perfect the image. to create myself as the prom queen, the princess, the head cheerleader, the slut and the virgin.

could they see themselves reflected in me? that we are the same? that my subversion and normativity are aligned? that our boyfriends will never understand our relation with each other- that unseparable bond between girls. that secret alliance between polished toes and desire for boys. am i different than them? are they different than me? am i subversive to their dominance? then do they maintain unstable in their angst, whereas i hold my head high, full aware that i hold a secret that all boys want and will never understand. and that i am more powerful to myself than the affection of any boy and that boys should be the ones afraid of me. how is it that

they are the normative and i am the subversive, when the difference is that i am aware of celebrating my own desirability and sexuality?

it's taken me years to explain to my parent's that i still want that dream wedding i planned since i was a girl. that it's not a fluke that i loved dolls, dresses, and boys. that latter is the hardest to explain. recently my mom and i sat down



and cleaned out my high school closet- going through all the passed notes, craft supplies, old makeup, and dolls. i finally explained to her, point blank, that i

am still and always will be that little girl i was. coming out to my mom as a femme was the easiest and hardest thing in the world. she had so many fears of me becoming the cliché angry andro dyke who will live a hard life, and end up alone. it saddens me that she has a hard time grasping that i am still that hardened dyke. and that is my history and identity. yet, i am also the giddy high school girl who knows how to make boys knees melt with a flutter of my eye.

i have never in my memory been attracted to matured biological males. there is something i've known since puberty that draws me towards the butch, the masculinity captured in a female body. the tomboy. the boygirl. the tough girl who will live a tough life.

the difference, to me, between boy-  
12 girls and dykes is all too



apparent. dykes see me taking advantage of a society that promotes my identity. maybe i'm not gay enough. i pass in a straight world. a straight wannabe. a flash in the pan trendy dyke. i must be bisexual. not 'really' gay. someone who looks and acts like i do because of fear from normative society.

yet, i'm the queerest of the queer. in a world full of caterpillars, it takes balls to be a butterfly.

boygirls see that. they see that i don't fit into a gay-straight spectrum. i may have consuming crushes on teen boy idols like n\*synch's lance bass. does that mean i'm not queer? is it perverse that i fall head over heels for young, prebuscent boys because of their resemblance to boygirls? am i not a young, prebuscent girl in my own latent stage of sexual being? am i not straight and gay at the same time?

femme as a word, and identity, and a social construct to me means that confidence i hold within me. that i embrace the girl in me. i am a drag queen and i am a prom queen. and i hold both in the same place within the space of my body.

girl. i am a girl to a boy. i am a girl to a boy whether or not i am single, cruising, dating another girlie girl, or partnered to a boy. i am always a girl for that boy. i am not yet a woman, yet not still holding that angst that was instilled in me since i hit the age of eleven and was socialized into being physically insecure, doubtful of my own intelligence and attraction. girl. the word takes back what was taken from me when i was age wise younger. yet, reflects that i am only beginning this journey. i have a long way to go to become a woman.

# THE NATION UNDER GOD

On the whole religion question:

Has anyone noticed an increase in 'weird' religious activity in their area? I'd be interested in some dialog on the subject. here in sunny(Huh?) san francisco I've noticed an influx of Church of Latter Day Saints in their smart suits wandering around for about the past 6 months. While it's not my bag per se. I've often thought about chatting up the cuter ones... Hell, if they can recruit, I'm certainly not going to be shy...

In the past two or three weeks, I've also seen a bunch of people in "Jews for Jesus" t-shirts passing out pamphlets. It's sort of spooky.

I know our new prez (Sig Heil!) is born again. I guess that's what it takes to overcome a coke habit. Fitting with all the other born-again fundie fux i've met, he seems to be dumb as a napkin. Now I have a lot of compassion for those in society with learning disabilities. I probably have a minor one myself. I don't however have a lot of patience for trust-fund hippies who wield absolute power in a dangerous and irresponsible manner, especially in the name of a wrathful god.

Also new on the 'Warriors of God' front was a very strange booklet found in our mailbox last week. Entitled "Jesus Speaks", this seems to be a fundraising device for an organization called 'Saint Matthew's Churches'. I guess you send them money, and they

send you something called the Gold Book (unless their typographers really fucked up throughout, and it should read The Good Book). Most of the

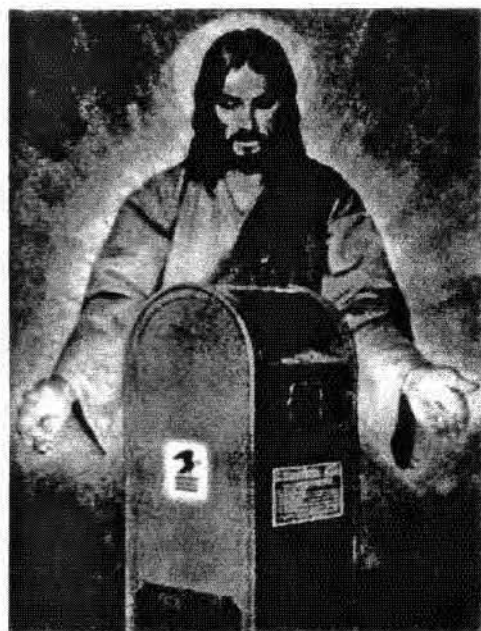
GOLD BOOK HARVEST READER...

## BLESSED WITH HOME & A GAS STATION

ILLINOIS - 66 Dear [Saint Matthew's],...God blessed me with a home and a gas station...I AM A GOLD BOOK MEMBER...I love the Lord so

This is an actual excerpt from Jesus Speaks. Weird, Huh?

testimonials are about how people prayed to St.



Matthew, and got something.

Money. A baby, a home, etc.

In Michigan, Ken Orr, who owns a gay bar in Ann Arbor, has done something very inspiring. He heard that Fred Phelps (god-hatesfags.com) was coming to protest his bar.

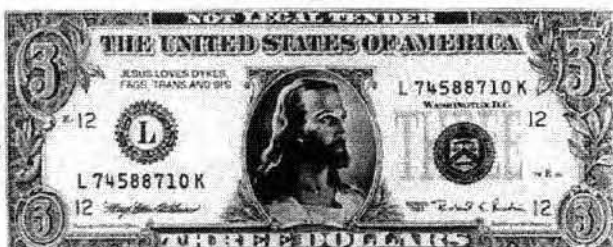
He asked friends

and patrons to donate whatever they could for each minute Phelps protested, and raised \$7500 for gay organizations. Kinda kewl, huh? (The original story came from:

[http://web.wichitaeagle.com/content/wichitaeagle/2001/04/29/localnews/0429getz\\_txt.htm](http://web.wichitaeagle.com/content/wichitaeagle/2001/04/29/localnews/0429getz_txt.htm))

It seems that the fundies in Milwaukee (where this zine originated) have been getting themselves worked up since January, fully expecting that their terrorism against women will be sanctioned by the new federal government, or at least the oval office. If this is the case where you are, please pop us a letter or email letting us know what's up where you are.

I don't for one second believe that the next four years are going to be easy, especially for those of us



who are queer gender-fuckers. I do think, however that there are enough of us around to resist a xtian-rightist trampling of our rights. we just need to network and organize.

# LIT OF THE SEXUAL UNDERGROUND

by seeley  
quest

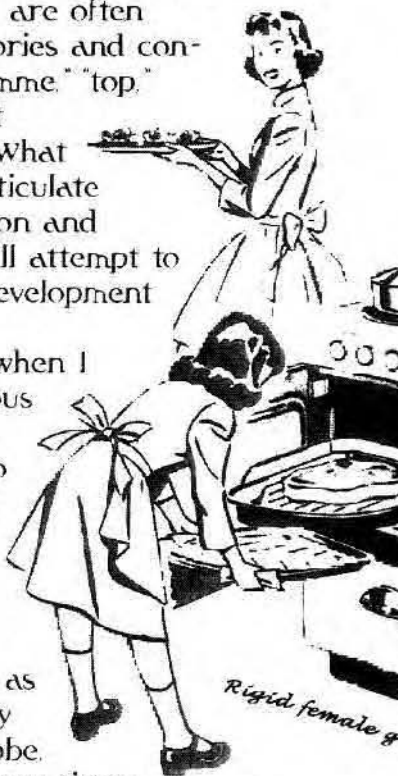
How do I relate to issues of defining and describing desire—a draw towards certain kinds of gender expression, of sexual expression? Why do the particularities of these feel so underground? When one is conscious of oneself as “queer,” in terms of sexual preferences that deviate from our cultural norm of monogamous heterosexuality, differences in the energy we manifest, the behaviors we present, are often linked to gendered categories and conceptualized as “butch,” “femme,” “top,” “bottom,” “switch,” etc. But does that work for me? What language can I find to articulate identifications that draw on and beyond such categories? I’ll attempt to describe the continuing development of my gender story.

Since junior high, when I began to be more conscious of what I wanted to wear, I’ve primarily gravitated to the practical, comfortable and utility-oriented vs. frivolous, fashionable, and that which involves artifice: since my youth male clothes have figured as much or more prominently than female in my wardrobe.

It’s relevant that my younger sister and I were raised mainly by our father and were never really forced to adopt feminine style. The connections to femininity my non-custodial mother did occasionally impart made me anxious, such as the box mailed us of training bras and menstrual pads when puberty was beginning. However, even when spending time with my mother I was allowed to freely seek the clothes I wanted, which often amounted to men’s shirts at Goodwill. I also had a clear sense of what was sophisticated women’s fashion, though, and for example was intent on getting a black velvet evening gown and backseam hose for my prom—I wanted to have my femininity appreciated and not trivialized.

Through the end of high school I felt myself very challenged in the realm of “making it” as an acceptable girl in order to be attractive to boys, but never had a consciousness of queer possibility and real interest in women take off until I was 19

16 or 20. That opened up one can of worms. I



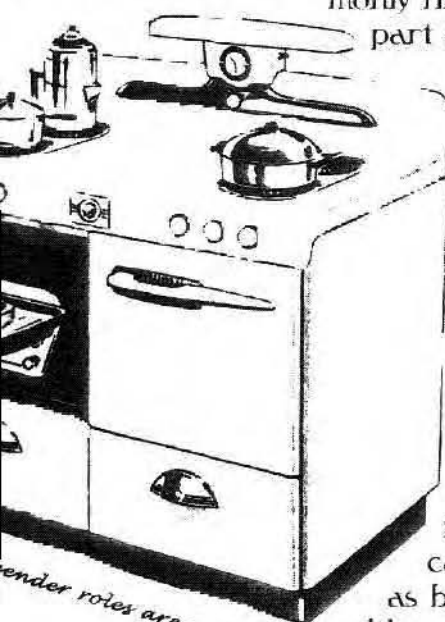


recently realized why I feel the term "bisexual" doesn't suit me. Hetero, bi, and homosexuality are based on our culture's paired-gender system: male/female. It's not that I'm attracted to the "opposite" of or "same" as myself, but have always been to many different kinds of people specifically because they are gender rule-breakers. It could be straight bioboy who are sensitive, queer boys who break the gender mold in all kinds of ways, straight or queer women who are strong (although the logic of the female gender role is so rigid that any women behaving beyond it may begin to be considered "queer"). In what ways I can relate as a sexual and appealing person to any of these types of people is a whole other matter.

Since coming out queer, still following my standard clothing inclinations and generally unmotivated to style beyond shaving my head simplistically, I commonly find myself considered

part of the butch club.

often demonstrating the least adherence to flattery of feminine appearance in a group of women I'm in. Though I've enjoyed adopting costumes for special occasions for years, and really appreciate the value of getting fancy and even outrageous if the spirit calls for it. I get read as butch-often just fine with me, and sometimes great. It's a handle I can latch



onto, one form for me that is recognizable to others and a way that I can recognize myself, and one that is respected and attractive for many people. Yet I feel limited by what it does and doesn't allow.

Many butches are still clearly recognizable as women: they have obvious breasts, etc. But sometimes how one is situated in butch, in female masculinity, is so edge-pushing that more questions of identity come into play. I have passed as male unintentionally all the time for a few years; lately I've been experimenting with cultivating that and seeing how far I can push being part of "the boys' club." If I wore a binding bra I could consistently pass a lot more butch or even tranny-male-but I lost motivation to be bothered with fucking bras years ago. I pass to straights; queers generally read me as female pretty readily. Apparently

now I'm reminding some gay boys of bioboys that they have dated: this is intriguing and appealing to me. I pass enough to stay ambiguous to lots of folks, and often I'm happy with that effect. I prefer not to correct how they read me—that is, what I really want when I explore being in the boys' club, or being whatever I'm being, is to play with people's assumptions that I'm male or female, for them to experience me as a person who's difficult to categorize, and to realize I pose interesting possibilities and that's what matters. The only time I'm not happy with exhibiting this ambiguity, and wish to stay inconspicuous to strangers as a boy (because I am conspicuous if they read me as "female"), is when I feel they will threaten me too much for provoking their sense of gender norms. When I wanted to be more readily acceptable as a girl (high school, pre-coming out), I wanted slightly larger breasts to make me feel more female. Lately I've wished they were smaller, to make it easier to pass and just be done with it. For example, I saw a bioboy a month ago wearing suspenders—I liked it, said yeah, I want to look good that way too, until I remembered—oh yeah, they're awkward tight against my shirts, draw attention to my breasts (or a binder I'd have to wear) instead of fitting together inconspicuously. I don't have an adequate chest—either fully bodacious breasts to make sexy with them, which at this point I wouldn't be comfortable with exploiting, or a smooth male one.

I've been contemplating lately understanding my body as far from female, and just operating from there—certainly my body hasn't reflected back much feminine potential to me, and I've never been comfortable with the struggle to cultivate that. I don't want the hassle of full breasts anyway, shaving every inch of hair, carrying around more female burden. My body's closer to male than acceptably female, that's the easier thing to identify with—although I don't want a dick or balls, either (well, not as a regular thing—only just once in a while, to experience that). They'd be incredibly in the way of activities, much like heavy breasts would be. This means that in fact androgyny is the ideal I'd desire for my body, or at least the closest state it can approximate. I can appreciate all kinds of gendered bodies from this perspective: swoon over very voluptuous female ones or toned and trim male ones for being something so different from me, and femme voluptuous male bodies or tight and sinewy female ones for reflecting closer to my experience. At the same time, when confronted with biologically male bodies, I'm reminded that mine is still far from that. My hips are distinctly female—I'd

make a very pretty boy.

How deeply am I really butch though, how intrinsic does it feel? Well, I mostly feel dangerously vulnerable, that I'm in foreign territory I'm unsuited for, or certainly at least very self-conscious if I'm enacting something coded as femme or feminine, that's not naturally easy at all! But I often feel that self-consciousness, that challenging complicatedness, when performing as butch too. Certain femmes/females really bring out the butch in me, wanting to court them, balance cockiness with kindness, be bold and suave. But then I fear not meeting their standards for butchness, them disappointed that I'm not able to be predictable in a butch role all the time the way they expect it.

This fear is related to loss of interest from women I've dug before-I can put on a good show to a point, but I'm just not-yet, anyway-a tough dyke or top all the time. And just because among dyke friends I've come off so unidentified with femme or girly perspective, they couldn't imagine me interested in males for sexual/emotional partners, and I worry that they'd see it as evidence of vulnerability to the heterosexual model, not allow me room to be anything but butch.

Although there are many expressions of femininity I can never be successful or comfortable with, there are some inclinations I manifest that can't be categorized with my butch characteristics. For example, I occasionally desire to express my love through, and love for, diva-performed blues. It's a thrill to fall completely into the emotional, grandiose, voluptuous, quintessentially female persona of a torch singer, "lady sings the blues." This is not the energy I put out every day though, and has been incongruous to most others who read me as a rather unflashy butch, more reserved than given to flamboyant gestures. Perhaps because I'm not drawn to it as what I'm inclined to practice that often, when I have been moved to play as femme this way, the persona appears to be unconvincing, unappealing to other female butches or femmes, and gay men confirmed in those roles-I don't come across as a "real" femme. Perhaps the difference is the sexual motivation that Leslie Feinberg and Minnie Bruce Pratt say is crucial: I've never yet felt able or attracted to be a femme to a butch female or transgender-butch partner. I feel really challenged by the idea of being out-butched in such a partnership, of another woman as initiator and myself left totally vulnerable to her. I don't want to have this barrier to the possibilities of my relationships, so I'm presently thinking about why this is difficult for me. On the other hand, when I present butch attitude I get sexual attention from some women, and

respect from some queer men and women and straight allies who see me as a comrade, an acceptable and exciting person, but still don't from those for whom image and possession of over-the-top toughness or girlyness is more important.

they see my butch doesn't make the full grade.

When I present that diva kind of femme, even wildcat punk riot-grrrl attitude (which has a more diva edge than my punk boy energy that has more brava-do). I do get sexual attention



from some

men, but then risk being treated like a girl, more objectified and my strength and independence more disregarded. I'm still drawn to going there sometimes, to play with experiencing the position of femininity (this includes elements of gentleness, being open to receive, teasing them with my "womanliness," offering motherliness, emotional tenderness, etc.) and different quality of perception from males whose masculinity appeals to me, and the only way I think I can address my anxiety about such performing is to be completely clear with them about my full complexity of identity. At the same time, I find myself often able to identify with a "male" perspective toward women—that is, I can relate to getting turned on by encounters with "a woman," someone who is dressing or acting in a way that highlights their femaleness, softness...I can appreciate where these men who dig femme are coming from.

What only queer-minded folx who are boundary-breakers like me seem to be able to appreciate is the kind of boyfemme, screaming, flaming fag/drag/hag energy I've been lately finding I have juice for. This for me becomes a persona whose joy is about performance, clowning, being very gay in all senses, and to which gender is not too significant. This past summer was the first time I realized drag queens, and outside of that



moment of performance, gay male muscle/ queens could be sexually hot to me. I had respected them for years as adventurous comrades. In terms of community I'm most at home with right now, my affinity is for art fags and mixed gender groups of omnisexual, not rigidly bounded anarchist punks. Punk work for me because I feel less judgement, less concern about me adhering to the roles of a proper dyke, butch, femme, queer. A lot of the narrator's perspective in Stone Butch Blues resonated for me. But I differ from Jess importantly: at this point I'd say hell yeah! to exploring a sexual relationship with a friend like MTF Ruth. I'm not as clearly defined as Jess, my own gender inclinations move around the map, and I'm sexually/ emotionally inclined toward rule-breakers, people pushing my own limits and ideas further. An instant of Jess and Ruth speaking helped illuminate this for me:

"There's a place somewhere inside of me where I've never been touched before. I'm afraid you'll touch me there. And I'm afraid you won't. My femme lovers knew me well, but they never crossed those boundaries inside of me. They tried to coax me across the borders into their arms, but they never came after me. You're right there with me. There's no place for me to hide. It scares me." Ruth smiled sadly. "Isn't it funny? That's exactly why I would like to make love with you." (p270) She-Ruth-is my kind of person!

I was recently musing over newly finding myself attracted to two male friends of mine: one a Radical Faery-type who's very free-spirited and loving, sexually adventurous and sometimes finding girls hot as well, one who's shyer and not as sexually experienced with men but a brave and open-minded anarchist who's limits I'm very intrigued to explore. I suddenly imagined a particular three-way configuration of us together: me on top sodomizing Faery while he's sodomizing shyboy; very hot. That this would be a hot fantasy to me speaks of how warm and at home I feel with queer bioboys, with any queers who'd accept me presenting myself as genderqueer, that the kind of sexually abundant world I want is beyond definitions of faggery, female or male partners enjoying time together, beyond limits to our behaviors and interactions based on gender. I feel this underground is rising.

7/24/01 notes: yes, i had a crush on Wing for a bit-i got to know him and his proclivities better and got over it. and since december i've gotten less scared and more adventurous about inhabiting different gender personas. flame it.

# ARE YOU A SEXY sissy?

**Are You a Sexy Sissy?** Take our consumerwhore quizlette to find out.

**1) On your hot date to the Ice Cream Shoppe you get a banana split with**

- a) Blue Moon, Pink Bubblegum, and Pistachio
- b) Chocolate, Vanilla, and Strawberry
- c) Mocha Choc. Chunk, Chocolate, and Coffee

**2) After the Ice Cream Shoppe, as you and your cutie are walking through the park, they shiver from the cool night air. You offer them**

- a) A light blue zip-up hoodie
- b) A black leather MC
- c) Your obergine Polartek 300 fleece from Patagonia

**3) After the hot date, you call the object of your desire from**

- a) The office phone system
- b) a bright yellow mobile fone
- c) a pay phone that you 'phreaked', bouncing the call through 5 countries and off two satellites

**4) You arrange a second date, and go to pick them up**

- a) on a skateboard, bicycle, or rollerskates
- b) on a Piaggio
- c) In a late model SUV

**5) It's your best friend's birthday. You**

- a) Go nuts at the local Sanrio joint, getting them all manner of pencils, erasers, stickers, etc.
- b) Get them a copy of "Wicked" by Gregory Maguire
- c) Get them a gift certificate from Amazon.com

**6) Nail Time! You need the fiercest talons to show up that bitch who works in accounting. Do you go for:**

- a) Basic Black. Goth her eyes out.
- b) Metallic Blue. You can do hip colors, and pretend your going to a rave.
- c) Fuck Me Red. Enough said about that.

**7) You're on your way out to a club for the evening. As you look in the mirror you decide:**

- a) you look ok the way you are. Let's go dance!
- b) the 'fresh and clean' look is what you're after. You

**22** pluck your eyebrows, wash your face, and you're out the

door.

c) Sparkle, Baby, Sparkle. Glitter, eyeliner, powder, the whole works! An hour later you're on your way.

8) At the club, the DJ is spinnin a good set. You need to hear that one song to get you out on the floor for good. You slide up to the booth and request:

- a) Crystal Waters
- b) Bronski Beat
- c) Guns 'N Roses

9) After boogey-ing for a few hours, you work up an awful thirst. You go to quench it with:

- a) A coke with a twist of lime
- b) A bottle of water, served cold
- c) A Shirley Temple with extra cherries

10) The boy of your dreams reminds you of somebody from a John Hughes film...you ponder it for a while and then it comes to you. He is just like:

- a) Long Duck Dong from Sixteen Candles
- b) Keith from Some Kind of Wonderful
- c) Ducky from Pretty In Pink

score:

- 1) a=5 b=0 c=2
- 2) a=5 b=2 c=0
- 3) a=0 b=2 c=5
- 4) a=5 b=3 c=0
- 5) a=5 b=2 c=0
- 6) a=5 b=2 c=0
- 7) a=0 b=2 c=5
- 8) a=2 b=5 c=0
- 9) a=2 b=0 c=5
- 10) a=0 b=3 c=5

0-15: You're not much of a sissy at all. You may or may not be sexy, but for now, consider getting in touch with your more femme qualities. The world will thank you.



16-30: Halfway there is a great start. If you work a little harder, you'll soon be mincing about with fluttery hands, stealing hearts of people all over the place.

31-50: What are ya, some kind of sissy? Of course you are. And a sexy one with good taste, at that. Pretty in Pink ain't just a song to you. You live it every day, and the stone foxes that you attract love you for it. We here at Mutate love you for it, too. Way to go!!!

# A sort of letter to my mother in NJ

by Christina Labaloff



I am telling my mother about the turbulence on my last flight back to San Francisco. My mother tells me to do two Hail Mary's and one Our Father before take off. I laugh what I think is a silent chuckle. "Why are you laughing about this?"

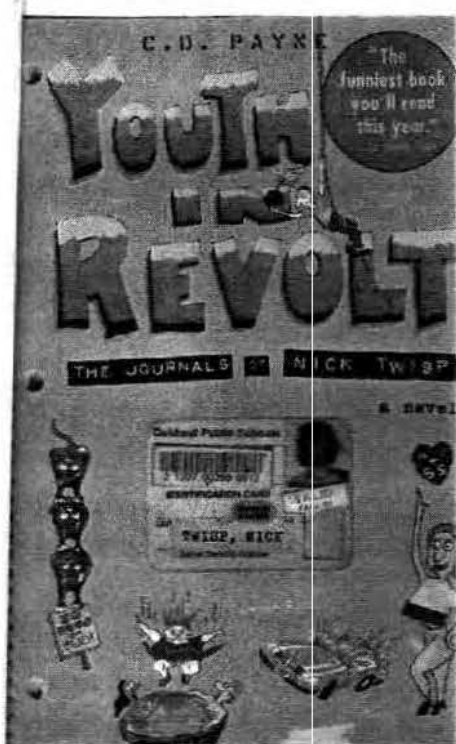
I'm serious. You should really do that and your brother wants you to go to church with him, he tells me you won't go to church with him." I want to calmly tell her that I don't pray before take off because I have this odd feeling that if this air craft is going to go down it is going to go down and that will just be my sorry luck. And I never knew GOD was a mechanic anyway - they must have skipped over that part in sunday school. I'd sooner pray to the Click and Clack of airplanes then that mystical male God...and anyway I figure there are enough people on this plane praying there sweaty little hands off before take off that if something decides to save them I will benefit from there good fortune and piety.

I want to hug my mother and tell her I am really not all that bad and i think it ironic really, how her and my brother have somehow bonded again through believing that there is a big white male looming above us in the sky. Painting Maui blue and yellow and making all the good things happen. Oh I know Mother that you know that god can come in any form and really I am not such a heathen as you think. I believe in something- something greater then me...some mystical spirit some form of fate....i am a silly dreamer among a lot of cynical bastards. Really. You would be proud of me. It's just this loud girl in me who can't stand to think that women were made from the rib of man when really man was made from the sweet crimson blood of a woman... and i guess it does just have a lot to do with this ridiculous patriarchal society that we all live in and this is where you start to roll your eyes at me, but it,s true mama...and i don't want a god that wears a white robe and has a long beard and a hairy face and keeps women in their place.

So next time i take off i'll think of you praying for me.. and i will stare ahead at that stupid little phone on the back of the seat that no one ever uses anyway and i will think well if i am going to go i am going to go and if there is a god looming up there i sure hope its a sweet old fat woman who has a lot of warm cookies waiting for



# BOOK. Em, Danno



## Youth In Revolt.

The Journals of  
Nick Twisp - A  
Novel

by C.D. Payne  
© 1993, 1995,  
Broadway Books  
500 p.  
ISBN 0-385-  
48196-9

I picked this charming little book up because:

- a) I liked the title.
  - b) I liked the cover.
  - c) I like teen-splottation
- or

d) all of the above

the answer is d) all of the above. Youth in revolt is the story of Nick, told by Nick himself. He's a basically good kid with a whole host of fucked up circumstances in his life, and at 13 and 14, he's trying to learn how to deal with them.

The basic story is pretty familiar, with some nice twists. Nick meets a girl while staying in a trailer park on summer vacation. Sheeni, is foxy, precocious, and 'intellectual' in a slightly annoying way guaranteed to fuck with parents and teachers. She's also the product of born-again parents, and so believes that rebellion is the hottest thing since sliced bread.

And so, by flirting, withholding sex, badgering, guilt and blackmail, she turns our hero, Nick, from a basically good kid into an adolescent urban terrorist.

Along the way, Nick blows shit up, sucks a dick, splits his personality into good and bad characters, and eventually crossdresses his way to success.

While slightly irritating at points, this book, for the most part, is thoroughly enjoyable.

# **BAD**



# **REPUTATION**

Non sequiter:

As I begin this piece I am thinking about my friend Pam, who used to be my boss a few years ago. On a trip to a trade show, she confessed a love of Earth, Wind, and Fire. At the time I was amused... now, it makes me think that she should love rock n' roll.

Joan Jett seems to have made a resurgence in the communities that I travel through lately. I know that she recently played shows in the Bay Area, and further south in Santa Cruz, and supposedly she was amazing.

She appeals to an interesting (at least in my mind) cross-section of people in my life, and this I find amusing. Cory, a tried and true metalhead with an affinity for black metal was the first person to play Joan Jett for me. Also, my 'daddy' video store friend likes her. A lot of the punk dykes i know and love are pretty die-hard about this chick. And my bio-sister can appreciate her on a cold december day in NYC, despite her more pedestrian (in my opinion) musical tastes.

My love of Joan Jet really began about 18 months ago. As I mentioned, Cory played some of her music for me about 3 years ago, but I didn't think much of it. I tended to disregard a lot of his music, because we are generally in very different places. He went from punk to black metal, and I'm pretty much a New Wave kid.

Joan Jett I 'discovered' on my own then, after finding reference to "Roadrunner" in Zodiac by Neil Stevenson. There seems to be a hole in pop music where girls and cars come together. Most car music is done by



swishy sounding beach bums, but Roadrunner is a beast of a different stripe. I picture Ms. Jett in a black Camero SS, blazing down I-95 in New Jersey, leaving Jan and Dean, and Brian and Denny Wilson farting

around in an old woody station wagon.

All of this is compounded by my current interest in girlgroups. Some of this interest is VERY old school with chicks like Leslie Gore, and Mama Cass Elliot, but they are relative mel-

low by comparison. Mostly, I've been grooving to Bikini Kill, Sleater-Kinney, Le Tigre, The Butchies, and a whole host of other 'riotgrrrl' type bands.

I think it can be argued that Joan Jett is an original that has informed the music of said riotgrrrls. Her passion as a woman, and the rawness of her sound has helped influence a whole generation of amazing musicians. It also helps to fuel non-musicians (like me) in endeavours like producing zines and generally raising hell.

As an ancillary end note, I was at a Bangs show a few nights ago, and there was a cute punk girl dancing in front of me. Sewn to the back of her hoodie was a WWJD patch. I think that's the best response to the stoopid fundie-christians that i've seen yet. With her "Bad Reputation" as a "Rebel Girl"; What Would Joan Jett Do?

# 500 KILLA-WATTS



I found my heroes and idols in John Hughes movies. Specifically I've always wanted to be Watts. In reality I was much more Duckie Dale, but that's besides the point.

Watts had it all. She's sexy, smart, sassy, she's got cool friends, drives an awesome car, and plays the drums. Total chick magnet.

I feel like she could have any boy or girl she wanted. Ever. She's the archetype for so many butchyfemme grrrls. The short bleached hair, finger-less leather gloves, always in pants...but she looks good in makeup, isn't afraid of her breasts, and has a thing for diamonds (which are a girl's best friend)

I guess what I love most about her, though is how she carries herself. She moves through the world of prep-pys like Hardy Jennis and skins like Duncan with grace and quick wit. She's not afraid to show love (for Keith) and grace around the 'competition' of Amanda Jones. In the end, she knows she'll be the one with the diamond earrings and the sensitive artist boy. And she'll still be driving the Morris Mini.



It's been about 6 years since I've seen *Some Kind Of Wonderful*, and about 6 weeks since i've listened to the soundtrack. When ever I do, I always think of her. Because "It's 1987, Ray. A girl can be whatever she 28 wants." And his mom's a plumber.



# Another Book To Hide From Your Parents

**The Ethical Slut**

**A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities**

**By Dossie Easton and Catherine A. Lizst**

**ISBN # 0-890159-01-8**

As has been stated in the previous issue of Mutate, I'm a pretty avid reader. Depending on other factors in my life, I read between 1 and 4 books a week. Sometimes that is just re-reading old favorites, and sometimes, its new material.

About every 6 months I read something that absolutely blows my mind, and shakes up my worldview. This book sort of covers that for me. I have long been aware of 'infinite sexual possibilities'. I cam out of the closet at 18 as bisexual, and have remained a 'bats for both teams' type of person ever since. So in that regard, this book doesn't have a lot of surprises.

On the other hand, to find a guide to realizing these possibilities, in a sane, safe, fun manner is mind blowing. Up until a year ago, I thought it would be very difficult to find and retain friendships and relationships that allowed for the type of freedom I craved.

The discussions are very frank, and really do provide a guide to being non-monogamous, and to express polyamory and polyfidelity. They even have good definitions for these and a host of other words.

Among the topics explored are issues of jealousy, economics, conflict and agreements. Here is good information about partnering in multiples, raising children and forming families and tribes.

I think this notion, forming tribes, is so important. In my personal life, I don't subscribe to a lot of **29**

hippy-dippy new age crap. I'm not a womyn, nor a Faerie, nor goddess centered. I do, however, believe that the lines between friends and lovers is extremely blurry, and that three or more intelligent, consensual adults can perhaps have a more fulfilling life, and do a better job of raising children than just 2, or one. (Reread that sentence carefully)

Among the things in the book that I find useful is the way that Catherine and Dossie each use personal experiences and the experiences of friends as examples of how to live in polyworlds. The examples range, but are all concrete. A lot of other reading I've done on the subject has been too diaphanous.

Of course, as thorough as the book is, there are things missing. Though one can't expect one book to be the sum total information point on a subject, it would have been nice to see a little more about single people. Dossie and Catharine are very explicit about expressing the 'other' type of living and loving. They do not assume partnership for the reader, making the information accessible. There is a gap, I feel, though.

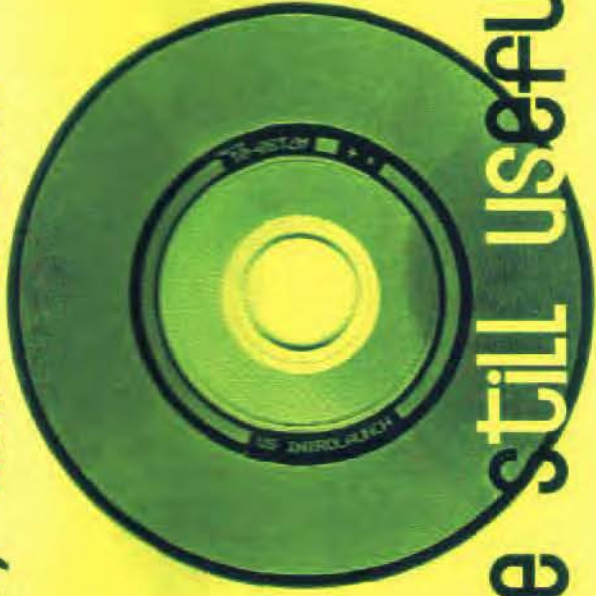
They also are very careful to refrain from being deliberately ageist. Unfortunately, this comes off in favor of older adults. Maybe this is a reflection of the world at large, but a few more resources for young adults (in our late teens and twenties specifically) would be nice.

In terms of resources, however, they do an excellent job. There are ten pages of other organizations and books to explore.

All told, this book is a fantastic read, and a good starting point for anyone who considers monogamy to be an outdated concept, or just not for them. Highly recommended.

older messages, like older technology,

CONDOM  
**doek**  
STOP AIDS



are still useful



If used properly, latex condoms are effective against pregnancy, AIDS and other STD's.

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If used properly, latex condoms are effective against pregnancy, AIDS and other STD's.

↑↑= / HAVE  
YOU GENE DE  
R F U C K E D Y O  
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D A Y ?

